

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 2, 2022

The Honorable Samantha Power  
Administrator  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Ronald Reagan Building  
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Administrator Power:

Thank you for your work to lead USAID's critical efforts to address food insecurity, including the Emergency Food Security Program. We write to raise our concerns about global food security challenges and highlight the ways in which proteins made using plants, animal cell cultivation, or fermentation that mimic the sensory characteristics of conventional animal proteins (together, "alternative proteins")<sup>1</sup> may prove to be a powerful tool in combating both hunger and climate change around the world.

According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), one in nine people today do not have enough to eat.<sup>2</sup> We regularly hear food security cited as a top priority from U.S. partners around the world. Recently, global food insecurity has been exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine; Russia and Ukraine typically provide for 30 percent of global wheat exports, mostly to countries in the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. However, following the Russian invasion, Ukraine halted its exports of food products and food prices have skyrocketed, reducing the availability and affordability of food for consumers – particularly for low-income consumers. Alternative protein products may present a unique opportunity to supplement USAID's global food programs, creating diversity in global food systems to prevent crises from disrupting access to food.

Further, if widely implemented, alternative proteins can contribute to the fight against climate change. Widespread use of alternative proteins could greatly reduce the greenhouse emissions produced around the world, as plant-based meat uses up to 99 percent less land and cultivated meat uses up to 95 percent less land.<sup>3</sup> Unused land could be used to reduce deforestation, sequester carbon, protect biodiversity, and generate renewable energy – measures that would help countries contribute to global climate goals.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Defined in the [FY22 House Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/overview>

<sup>3</sup> <https://gfi.org/resource/cultivated-meat-lca-and-tea-policy-recommendations/>;  
<https://gfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/GFI-Plant-Based-Meat-Fact-Sheet-Environmental-Comparison.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://gfi.org/resource/a-global-protein-transition-is-necessary-to-keep-warming-below-1-5c/>

As you may know, the alternative protein industries are advancing quickly worldwide. Without intervention, in the future developing countries may have to import these alternative protein products from other nations with developed alternative protein sectors. This may be an opportunity for USAID to work with stakeholders to foster the creation of these industries in developing countries so that these companies are locally owned and positioned to compete for market share in the new protein economy.

With this in mind, we request the following information with respect to plant-based, cultivated, and fermented proteins in a written response:

- Please provide a summary of USAID's current use of alternative proteins in food security and economic development programs.
- What obstacles, if any, might there be to including alternative proteins in USAID's food security programs?
- Has USAID or their partners conducted any studies related to including alternative proteins in their food security programs? If so, what were the findings? How, if at all, are the findings informing the agency's planning and implementation of food security programs?
- Does USAID plan to research the feasibility of including alternative proteins in future global food security strategies?

A version of this letter has also been sent to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



Susan Wild  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



---

Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress



---

Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress



---

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



---

Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress



---

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



---

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



---

Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



---

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



---

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



---

Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress



---

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



---

Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



---

Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



---

Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress